

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 18-26 remain in this application. An RCE accompanies this amendment.

The courtesy extended by Examiner Kathleen Sonnett during the telephone conversation with the undersigned is acknowledged with appreciation. Amendments to the claims have been made to reflect the conversation as explained below.

In the Office Action, claims 21-25 were indicated as having allowable subject matter. Claim 21 was objected to for informalities. Claim 21 has been amended as discussed with the Examiner to recite each of the hooks of the first set has a transverse dimension greater than a transverse dimension of each of the hooks of the second set. This amendment overcomes the informalities objection and allowance of claims 21-25 is respectfully requested.

Claims 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Palmaz (U.S. 4,793,348); Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Bosma, et al (U.S. Patent 6,989,021); Claims 1-8 and 10-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Palmaz (U.S. 4,793,348) in view of Weldon, et al (U.S. 6,468,290); Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Palmaz in view of Weldon, et al and Russell (U.S. 6,958,074); and Claims 18-20 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Weldon, et al in view of Bosma et al. (U.S. 6,989,021).

Independent claim 12 has been amended to recite that the struts have a first widthwise dimension and divide at a first end into oppositely directed struts of a second widthwise dimension smaller than the first widthwise dimension and then converge with an oppositely directed strut of an adjacent strut. This amendment was made in conformance with the conversation with the Examiner to clarify the divided strut of the invention of claim 12 relates to the widthwise dimension. As discussed, this feature is not disclosed or suggested in Palmaz and therefore claim 12 is believed to distinguish over the Palmaz reference.

Claims 13-15 depend from claim 12 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 12 is believed patentable.

With respect to independent claims 18 and 20, these claims have been amended along the lines discussed with the Examiner. Claim 18 now recites the hook has a single ear as suggested by the Examiner; claim 20 recites that the hook is on only one side of the longitudinal axis. Neither the Weldon or Bosma patents disclose this feature. The Bosma hook has two ears (not one as in claim 18) and a hook which is positioned on both sides of the longitudinal axis (not only on one side as in claim 20). Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 18 patentably distinguishes over the combination of Weldon and Bosma (and the obviousness rejection should be withdrawn).

Claims 19 and 26 depend from claims 18 or 20 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons as claims 18 and 20 are believed patentable.

Claim 1 recites inter alia a vessel filter having a first region having a filter portion having a converging region at a first end portion to direct particles toward the center of the filter. The first region includes a plurality of struts extending longitudinally through the first region and being unconnected in the first region. The second region is flared in the expanded position to have a transverse dimension increasing toward a second end portion opposite the first end portion. The second region includes a vessel engaging portion at the second end portion, a plurality of spaced apart struts with adjacent struts being joined and a first and second set of vessel engaging hooks. Palmaz has a latticework structure which extends from the headpiece 60 through a filtering portion and an intermediate portion. In contrast, in the filter of claim 1, the struts are unconnected in the filter region. Weldon does not cure the deficiencies of Palmaz. Therefore, for at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over Palmaz and Weldon and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 is believed patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should the Examiner believe it would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:   
Neil D. Gershon  
Reg. No. 32,225  
Attorney for Applicant

Rex Medical  
1011 High Ridge Road  
Stamford, CT. 06905  
203 329-8750